Feel the warmth of México.

MAZATLÁN

You will sense it right away. Mazatlán is special. It is an easy, breezy, carefree resort where fun and informality reign and attitudes are relaxed. This is a place where you can take your surfboard on the bus, live in cutoffs, or go to a disco in short sleeves.

Several features make it particularly exciting. It is one of México's leading harbors and has the country's largest shrimp fleet. It is one of the world's most important deep sea fishing capitals where over 5,000 billfish are boated every year. It is also one of the few resorts in the country where hunting and surfing are permitted.

Beaches are spread out and spectacular. Though modern hotels line them, they still give the feeling of being unspoiled and there is more than ample room to play or relax. Days tend to begin and end earlier than they do elsewhere because of the emphasis on sports and the great outdoors. If you really want to unwind in a Pacific paradise, this is the place for you!

The Layout

Mazatlán is spread out. The major area that visitors see stretches from the lighthouse on the tip of the southern peninsula to condominiums on the north beaches. The airport is a 20-30 minute ride from the Hotel Zone. The "Strip" of seaside highway where most of the sparkling hotels are located begins in the older vicinity of Hotel La Siesta and winds north to the Camino Real. Zona Dorada (the Golden Zone), the most action-packed area, lies between Valentino's disco and the Balboa Club along Rodolfo T. Loaiza and Camarón Sabalo Avenues. Other good restaurants and shops border Avenida del Mar, a five-minute ride away. The bustling downtown area lies behind the older section of the highway, just past the Monument to the Fisherman.

Accommodations

Posh private clubs, villas, condominiums, deluxe to one-star hotels and even trailer parks are available. Hotels are generally smaller and cozier than those in other Pacific resorts, but most surpass international standards in their categories and all world class facilities and amenities are available. Most major hotels are located along the north beaches. Rates generally go down as you go south. The beach is rarely more than a short walk away.

How to Get Around

Though just about everything you would like to see or do is on or just off the seaside highway, Mazatlán's tourist zone is relatively spread out. Taxis are plentiful but slightly more expensive than they are in other major resorts. They are unmetered, so check the price before you enter. Most major hotels post average rates. Cars, mopeds, and bicycles are available for rent. Or, you can hop aboard a "pulmonía," a funny little open-air vehicle with a fringe on top, which is a Mazatlán trademark. They cost ½-⅓ less than taxis. Hourly rates for shopping or sightseeing are U.S.$9.00/hour in taxis, U.S.$6.00 in pulmonías. White and yellow public buses link major hotels. The fare is 220 pesos. Less comfortable grey buses are 180 pesos.

Sports

Mazatlán is truly a sportsman's paradise. It is one of the few leading Pacific resorts that offers fabulous hunting, fishing and surfing, and the only one that boasts as many fishing boats as tennis courts!

Water sports abound. If your hotel has no sports center, go to El Cid where you can arrange for windsurfing, paddle boats, Hobie Cats, catamarans, scuba diving, sailboats, or snorkeling. They also have an amphibious "duck" that will take you across to a primitive island for a day of sunning and swimming. Parachute rides are available on major beaches. A 10-12 minute ride costs about U.S.$15.00

Major hotels have tennis courts. If yours does not, go to the Racquet Clubs at El Cid, Las Gaviotas or Reforma.

There are two 18-hole golf courses: El Cid in the Hotel Zone and the Country Club (Club Campestre) on Highway 15, 20 minutes from town.

Deep sea fishing boats can be arranged at fleet headquarters at Olas Altas. Even if you are not a fisherman, it is fun to drive out in the late afternoon to see the day's catch on display.

Hunting or shooting excursions can be arranged through guides. Call 1-60-60 or 3-59-36.

Horses can be rented at Guadalupe Ranch, a few minutes' ride from the Hotel Zone.

There are two conveniently located bull rings. The season is December-April.

Shopping

Though there is less emphasis on shopping than in some other places, a myriad of stores and boutiques vie for attention. Arts & crafts, resort wear and wonderful carvings of polished ironwood are favorite take-home treasures. Just about every hotel has at least one shop. Playa Mazatlán is particularly good. Store hours are generally 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m-7:00 p.m. The Municipal Market downtown is crammed with souvenirs. Those who prefer to shop in air conditioned comfort or to pay with credit cards can buy in the Hotel Zone. Designer's Bazaar and Boutique Nueva, left of the Mazatlán Arts & Crafts Center entrance, both on Ave. Rodolfo T. Loaiza, have the best resort wear for women. Benetton and Ralph Lauren franchises are on Ave. Camarón Sabalo. Galería Indio and Casa Roberto in Hotel Playa Mazatlán have original decorative items. Casa Pacífico on Camarón Sabalo has interesting jewelry. The best selection of arts & crafts from throughout the country is under the steps at the Mazatlán Arts & Crafts Center and down the street at Mercado Viejo. Sea Shell City is a sight in itself, especially the second floor. Fiorucci, Maraco, Las Cabañas and Acapulco Joe have newly opened stores in the Golden Zone.

Dining

Every meal in Mazatlán can be an event. Most restaurants are informal and most have music in the evening.

Dining hours tend to be earlier than those in other Mexican resorts. If you want to see restaurants at their finest, lunch around 1:30 or 2:00 p.m. and dine between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m.

Shrimp heads the list on most menus. Other seafood and meat dishes run a close second.

The Shrimp Bucket, flagship of the famous "Carlos n' Charlie's" chain, is a Mazatlán tradition that is popular with locals and visitors alike. They serve up hearty, tasty meals all day long beginning with breakfast and box lunches for fishermen at 6:00 a.m. It is a 10-minute ride from the Zona Dorada. Those who like to breakfast in the American style can try the no-nonsense Cafetería Avenida on Avenida del Mar.

Lunch may be at the hotel beside the pool or the beach. Locals like the reasonably priced seafood lunches at old favorites like Mamucas or El Marinero. Tequila Charlie's in the garden of the Mazatlán Arts & Crafts Center offers shaded garden dining with an occasional colorful Mexican Fiesta.

The time to see most Mazatlán restaurants at their best is at night. Get your evening off to a great start by watching an exquisite sunset at Joe's Oyster Bar in Hotel Los Sabalos. Then, linger over dinner at one of the wonderful restaurants. Señor Frog's on Avenida del Mar is as lively as they come. Plenty of pandemonium and spontaneous shenanigans make every meal unforgettable. Beverly Grill and El Patio are other lively places with their own disc jockeys

where you can dance between courses when the spirit moves you. Those who like it quieter can go to Aha Toro, where the noise level is several decibels lower. Sr. Pepper's, with soft piano music, and Chiquita Banana by the sea at Camino Real Hotel are pure romance. Those seeking refined, air conditioned dining might opt for Lafitte overlooking the ocean.

Nightlife

There are two excellent discos—Caracol Tango Palace in El Cid Hotel, a plush place where patrons sit in tiers around the dance floor, and Valentino's on a promontory overlooking the ocean. The beat is best between midnight and 2:00 a.m., which is legal closing time.

Excursions

The variety of excursions is extraordinary. You can take a boat tour to Stone Island or Deer Island; sail away on a tour of the bay and spot sea lions at play; charter a sailboat or a fishing boat; take off to a jungle rain forest and the ruins of San Blas; visit the Teacapan River on a river boat; or travel to the tiny mountain towns of Copala and Concordia.

Inside information

Climate: Average year-round temperature is 73°F. August-Oct. is the rainy season, but showers are usually short. Cool breezes make the climate comfortable year round.

What to wear: Generally, dress is less formal here than in other resorts. Well-put-together resort wear is fine for evenings. Leave socks, ties, jackets and cocktail dresses at home.

Current: Electrical current is the same as in the U.S.A.

Time: Mazatlán is on U.S. Mountain Time. Mexico City is one hour ahead. Check carefully if you are making airline connections or business calls.

Prime times: Banks are open weekdays from 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. "Casas de Cambio" (money exchanges) are open later.

Calling home: Hotels have a service charge for international calls. Local calls cost one peso.

Taxes and tipping: Porters get US$1.00 per bag. Pulmonía or taxi drivers do not expect tips unless you hire them by the hour. The Airport Departure Tax is US$10.00 for international flights, $3.50 for domestic.

Do not forget: A sturdy change purse will help accommodate heavy coins.

Numbers to know: The U.S. consulate: 129-88, Federal Tourist Office: 512-20; Municipal Tourist Office: 325-45.

Do not miss: Lunch or dinner at the Shrimp Bucket; dinner at Sr. Frog's; watching the sunset from a seaside bar; a Pulmonía ride; a visit to the Aquarium and its small zoo; sunning on the beach between Valentino's disco and Las Flores Hotel; and the local beer, Pacífico.

Note: The opinions and recommendations expressed in this brochure are those of the writer. They do not necessarily reflect an endorsement by the Secretaría de Turismo. These are just a few of the many places available to you. All prices subject to change without notice.

Turismo de México

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